

13. However, while consistency was always a desirable objective, it was not the primary driver of decision-making in Wales. Our primary objective was always arriving at the right response for the people of Wales. Quite often, what was the right response turned out to be the same in different parts of the UK and so consistency of messaging could be achieved – but achieving consistency of messaging at the expense of doing the right thing was not an option for the Welsh Government. The UK Government and the devolved governments were in agreement that different jurisdictions might move at different pace depending on the progress of disease in those Nations – see paragraphs 90 – 91 and 145 of my first statement in Module 2.
14. It is therefore disappointing that Mr Johnson felt the need to say in his statement at paragraph 153 that there was a risk of the devolved governments being “*different for the sake of being different*”. The need to be different for the sake of being different was never part of my thinking nor that of the Welsh Government.
15. There were two primary reasons why the Welsh Government made different decisions. Firstly, and most significantly, the circumstances in Wales were different to elsewhere in the United Kingdom and so the Welsh Government responded to the facts on the ground in Wales. The impact of the pandemic was not uniform across the United Kingdom. Secondly, there was a contrasting underlying approach between the UK Government and the Welsh Government. Our approach was careful, cautious and guided by the science to make sure that we did everything we could to protect lives.
16. I consider that Mr Johnson’s comment at paragraph 186 of his statement that the “*DAs needed to be handled with care*” betrays a cast of mind. It appears to me that his thinking, as the then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, was not that the UK Government needed to co-operate effectively with the devolved governments as equal partners who should be properly involved in decision-making, but that they had to be handled with care like a set of unruly, unreliable adolescents whose judgements were flawed. This cast of mind is further demonstrated by his comment that it was somehow “*optically wrong*” for the Prime Minister to be seen meeting with the First Ministers of the devolved governments, for fear it would give a false impression that the UK was a federal state. In my view, this demonstrates both a flawed sense of the proper governance of the United Kingdom and that the then Prime Minister had a hierarchal view of the UK, with the UK Government at the top of the structure. In this he was more influenced by status anxiety than by the substance of good decision-making. This